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**HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 23**

**46TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2003**

**INTRODUCED BY**

Ben Lujan

**A JOINT MEMORIAL**

**EXPRESSING CONDOLENCES ON THE DEATH OF AND APPRECIATION FOR THE  
LIFE OF LOUIS RICHARD ROCCO.**

**WHEREAS, Louis Richard Rocco died October 31, 2001 of lung  
cancer; and**

**WHEREAS, he was born on November 19, 1938 in Albuquerque;  
and**

**WHEREAS, in 1970, he volunteered to assist a medical team,  
whose mission was to evacuate eight severely wounded soldiers;  
and**

**WHEREAS, he crashed with that team in a helicopter, under  
intense enemy fire in South Vietnam; and**

**WHEREAS, with burned hands, a fractured wrist and hip and  
a severely bruised back, he carried three survivors to safety  
through twenty meters of hostile fire; and**

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1           WHEREAS, he received the Medal of Honor in 1974 for his  
2 valor; and

3           WHEREAS, he grew up in East Los Angeles, where he dropped  
4 out of high school and was frequently in trouble with the law;  
5 and

6           WHEREAS, he was arrested, at the age of sixteen, for armed  
7 robbery; and

8           WHEREAS, within one hour after his sentencing, he walked  
9 into an army recruiting office and found himself telling his  
10 life story to a sympathetic officer; and

11           WHEREAS, the officer helped Rocco get a suspended  
12 sentence, and the court said that if he stayed in school,  
13 obeyed a curfew and shunned his gang, he could join the army at  
14 age seventeen; and

15           WHEREAS, he received his general equivalency diploma and  
16 an associate's degree before leaving the army in 1978; and

17           WHEREAS, he served as director of the New Mexico veterans'  
18 service commission; and

19           WHEREAS, he worked extensively for advocacy groups to keep  
20 children off drugs and out of gangs; and

21           WHEREAS, as he was dying, he told an interviewer that he  
22 was forgiving and "at peace" and said, "I'm going to die; I  
23 don't want to die angry";

24           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE  
25 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that condolences be expressed to the family

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1 and friends of Louis Richard Rocco, a loving and devoted New  
2 Mexican; and

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this memorial be  
4 transmitted to his wife, Maria.

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